

Prepositions may be small words, but they are very important ones and their correct use shows your mastery of the language. Here are some hints about the correct use of some prepositions.

Beside and besides

Beside means 'by the side of'. Besides means 'in addition to'.

They have a house beside the sea. (by the side of the sea)

He stood beside me. (by my side)

He plays the violin besides the piano and the guitar. (He plays three instruments.)

Besides being a good actor, he is also a good singer. (= In addition to being a good actor, he is also a good singer.)

Since and for

Since should be used with a point of time in the past. It is used with a present perfect tense.

For is used only when you refer to a period of time.

He has been absent since Tuesday. (NOT He has been absent for Tuesday.)

I have been ill since last week.

He has been absent for three days. (NOT He has been absent since three days.)

I have been ill for two weeks.

Between and among

Between is used to refer to two or three separate people or things. Among is used when the reference is to a group of people or things which we do not see separately.

She sat among the children.

She sat between Susie and Ann.

This is a custom which exists among the Hindus.

He has a house between the river and the woods.

By and with

By is used to refer to the doer of the action. With is used to refer to the instrument with which

the action is performed.

The spider was killed by the boy.

The boy killed the spider with a stone.